



## **THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

#### **Consultation on Commonwealth governance plans**

The Chief Minister of Norfolk Island, the Hon Geoff Gardner MLA, said today that he is awaiting a response from the Commonwealth to written suggestions he has put forward about consultations on the governance plans announced by Minister Jim Lloyd MP on 20<sup>th</sup> February.

“It is very disappointing that in the two months since Minister Lloyd’s announcements, the Norfolk Island Government has not been provided with any more details of the Commonwealth’s plans, despite our repeated representations”, Mr Gardner said. “In the absence of any further information, I sought clarifications at a brief meeting with Minister Lloyd in Australia in late March. I also wrote to him on 12 April setting out some suggested directions to enable meaningful consultations between our two governments”.

Mr Gardner said that the Norfolk Island Government had requested that two senior Norfolk Island officials be added to the Commonwealth whole-of-government working party believed to be working on detailed plans arising from the announcements, including the extension of a vast range of Commonwealth legislation to Norfolk Island. As an alternative, the Chief Minister had proposed a joint task force of Commonwealth and Norfolk Island officials to identify the probable changes and transitional arrangements arising from Minister Lloyd’s announcements.

The Chief Minister also recommended that the Commonwealth consider, in tandem with its announced options, an alternate governance model which might better address issues of sustainability and be more acceptable to the Norfolk Island community. He said that to ensure an equitable outcome, the alternative governance model would require the same degree of consideration and relevant economic and social modelling as the two proposals so far outlined.

Mr Gardner added that this “third model” could be detailed and examined through either of the two consultative mechanisms he had suggested. He said that the proposals he had made to Minister Lloyd had been copied to all 17 Commonwealth Cabinet Ministers and that he was hopeful of receiving a favourable response in the near future.

Geoff Gardner  
**Chief Minister**

21<sup>st</sup> April 2006